

Amendment to the Claims:

Claims 1-3. (Cancelled).

4. (Currently Amended) A method of controlling the movement of plural trains along a network of track, comprising:

(a) dividing the network into plural planning areas, with each pair of adjacent planning areas sharing at least one common boundary element on track common to said adjacent pair of planning areas;

(b) developing a local movement plan for each planning area independently of the movement plan for other planning areas to control the movement of trains into and out of the selected boundary elements associated with the planning area; and

(c) evaluating the local movement plans for adjacent planning areas to identify conflicts at the respective boundary element, ~~The method of Claim 1~~ wherein said dividing the network into planning areas includes dividing the network as a function of the amount of proposed traffic for the track of each planning area.

5. (Cancelled).

6. (Currently Amended) A method of controlling the movement of plural trains along a network of track, comprising:

(a) dividing the network into plural planning areas, with each pair of adjacent planning areas sharing at least one common boundary element on track common to said adjacent pair of planning areas;

(b) developing a local movement plan for each planning area independently of the movement plan for other planning areas to control the movement of trains into and out of the selected boundary elements associated with the planning area; and

(c) evaluating the local movement plans for adjacent planning areas to identify conflicts at the respective boundary element, ~~The method of Claim 1~~ wherein the planning time horizon of each local movement plan is approximately eight hours.

7. (Original) The method of Claim 6 wherein each local movement plan is updated approximately hourly

8. (Cancelled).

9. (Currently Amended) A method of scheduling the movement of plural trains along a network of track, comprising:

(a) dividing up the network into a plurality of planning areas separated by boundary elements, with each boundary elements comprising a portion of the network of track which is common to respective planning areas;

(b) generating a movement plan for each planning area independently of other

planning areas to control the movement of trains into and out of the boundary elements;

and

(c) evaluating each of the movement plan and identifying scheduling conflicts at respective boundary elements, ~~The method of Claim 8~~ wherein said evaluating each of the movement plans includes:

[[~~(e)~~]] (d) assigning a business objective function for each of the trains in the planning area;

(e) evaluating the business objective functions for each of the trains; and

(f) identifying a capacity of the boundary element, constraints on occupancy times and the planned usage of the specified boundary element from each of the planning areas.

10. (Currently Amended) The method of Claim 9 wherein said modifying the movement plan includes:

[[~~(h)~~]] (g) providing movement order constraints for the each boundary element; and

[[~~(i)~~]] (h) ~~previing~~ providing an order for the trains to move through the boundary element.

11. (Cancelled).

12. (Original) A method of providing a detailed train movement plan for controlling the travel of plural trains of plural components along an interconnected network of tracks across a global planning area comprising:

(a) dividing the global planning area into plural local planning areas each including a portion of the network of tracks, the boundaries of adjacent local planning areas being crossed at points of network transition having common track elements (boundary elements);

(b) providing a daily schedule for all trains transiting the network, the daily schedule providing waypoints and activity locations and time of arrival and departure at, each of the waypoint and activity locations;

(c) providing a local movement plan (“LMP”) for each of the plural local movement areas revising the times of arrival and departure at the waypoints and activity locations to attempt to resolve all of the conflicts as to the usage of the portion of the network and train components within a local area independently of the resolution of any such conflicts in any other local area;

(d) comparing the LMPs having common boundary elements and resolving any conflicts in the common boundary elements by revising the LMPs.

13. (Original) The method of Claim 12 further including:

(i) independently monitoring the actual movement of train components over the network within each of the local planning areas; and

(ii) periodically updating each of the LMPs as a function of the monitored movement of train components.

14. (Original) The method of Claim 13 further comprising:

(i) comparing the updated LMP from each of the local areas with common boundary elements:

(1) periodically; and/or

(2) each time the LMP is updated.

15. (Original) The method of Claim 12 wherein said dividing comprises dividing the global planning area into plural local planning areas as a function of the amount of track included within the local area and the amount of proposed traffic for such included track.

16. (Original) The method of Claim 12 wherein said comparing the LMPs includes the step of identifying a conflict which can not be resolved.

17. (Previously presented) A method of scheduling the movement of plural trains along a network of track, wherein the network is divided into a plurality of planning areas, comprising:

(a) selecting the size of each planning area as a function of the amount of track and amount of proposed train traffic along the track in the planning area; and

(b) selecting the boundaries as a function of the portions of the network of track which is common to adjacent planning areas.

18. (Original) The method of Claim 17 wherein said developing a movement plan is performed independently for each planning area.

Claims 19-33. (Cancelled).

34. (Previously presented) The method of Claim 17, further comprising:

(c) developing a movement plan for each planning area.

Claims 35-37. (Cancelled).